

Restoration of local monument, Cas Veneranda, begins today

ORANJESTAD – During the celebration of Open Day of Monuments in Aruba, Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba (SMFA) and ministers of the local government proudly announced the beginning of the restoration of Cas Veneranda, located in Wilhelminastraat 7.

After a lot of preparations, since last week there is a lot of activity at Cas Veneranda. The first step was to obtain funds from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in order to reach a purchasing agreement with the original owner of Cas Veneranda. After the minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Geoffrey Wever received approval from the Parliament of Aruba, the second step was the preparations to sign the purchasing agreement with the family of the original owner, a sign contracts for rental. Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry DEACI will be the main tenant, and there will also be a hospitality establishment on the area on the side of Schoolstraat.

Regarding the design of the project, Hoevertsz ArchiDesign NV was selected as an architect, and together with the project leader



from SMFA, they guided the building team, consisting of Pro-tec for airconditioning, Rotech/Hecom for electricity, Smart Systems for security, and Dynaf for solar power. These contractors were involved in the process of design from the very beginning.

In the same period, the minister of Culture, Mrs. Xiomara Maduro together with Monumentenbureau started with the legal protection for the monument, to ensure that the history of the monument will be preserved forever and it will stay alive. SMFA started with the project "Tales of Cas Veneranda," where one and all can share pic-

tures and stories from antiquity at the monumental house.

The third step was the tender and execution of the first phase of the project: demolition. During the last years, a lot was added to the building that was not originally there. There was also a fire in 2014, which caused a lot of damage. Contractor General Property Services did a great job removing anything 'modern' from the monument. During the sloop phase, a lot more history of the monument was discovered. It is impressive to see how smart and creative the architect, Dada Picus, was back then. Remember that back when the building was constructed, there weren't any power tools or other modern tools to help the builders.

When the demolition was completed, the construction team could complete the drawings, plans and tenders for the second phase: restoration, which just began. This month an agreement was reached with contractor Jash Development NV, which in the past has already restored another monument for SMFA: Nicolaas Store in San Nicolas. Now, Jash Development NV together with other members of the construction team will restore Cas Veneranda. The restoration work will begin today, after the construction site was prepared, and it is expected to be completed by the end of november 2025.

chi's wife, Maria Veneranda, was charmed by, and so he came to Aruba back to build this building, which now we know as Cas Veneranda. At the time, this was one of the biggest houses built in Aruba.

Besides being a residential building, it was here that the first Super Ice cream show was located, as well as the first location for known craft store, Masyfral.

Oncha's flowerhop and the Consulate of Spain were also located in the building. At the end of the 1970s, the building was converted into Papiamentto Restaurant. During the two last years there, the restaurant also operated as a night club, Club Nouveau, after the restaurant closed at night. When Papiamentto Restaurant left the building at the end of 1990, the building was vacated.

In 2023, SMFA reached a purchasing agreement with Machi Arends' heir, and in March of 2024 the official handover for the building was completed, so that restoration could begin. This project is co-financed by the General Pension Funds of Aruba (APFA) together with the Restoration Fund of the Netherlands (NRF), and the ministry of Economic Affairs, Communication and Sustainable Development. After the restoration, the monument will become the offices of DEACI and also have a space for hospitality. □



The last step will take place at the end of 2025 or beginning of 2026, when the tenants will move into the monument. Then, SMFA will remain involved in the management of the building

Cas Veneranda

The very impacting building in Wilhelminastraat was built in 1936 by Federico Maximiliaan (Machi) Arends, who was the consul of Spain.

The architect was known master builder Dada Picus, who went all the way to Colombia to find inspiration from a building that Ma-

